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JANUSZ TOMIAK

Introduction

The character, scale and speed of the Second Russian Revolution call for a careful examination of the educational consequences of an upheaval which has irrevocably destroyed the foundations of the old political, social and economic structures in what was once the Soviet Union. True enough, the new order which is now emerging from the ruins of the old one is still far from acquiring more clearly definable features which would permit one to spell out with a high degree of precision the ultimate form and shape of things yet to come. It is, none the less, quite clear that there is a need for a much more radical reappraisal of the far-reaching changes which have taken place in the course of the last two years or so in that part of Europe than had originally been assumed by most people [1].

The hasty, yet decisive, abandonment of the key elements characterising the old system, namely, the concentration of all political power exclusively in the hands of the one and only, hierarchically structured party, the command economy and the closed society, created confusion and destabilised the Soviet state, economy and social framework. Yet replacing the key organisational features of the old system by political pluralism, a demand economy and an open society had originally been envisaged by Mikhail Gorbachev and his lieutenants as a viable, stable process of transformation which should have been successfully accomplished without major confrontations in the prevailing climate of *glasnost*' and *perestroika*. Little thought was given to the likelihood of political counteraction, the danger of the emergence of widespread nationalism and the organisational difficulties which were bound to arise in connection with the transformation of economic life in the country.

However, the removal of the existing control mechanisms released the pent-up forces of national chauvinism: it awakened the dormant or suppressed aspirations of most Soviet nations, nationalities and ethnic groups; provoked open clashes arising out of existing religious differences; and led to preoccupation with the maintenance of strong national profiles, which in turn paved the way for increasingly pronounced fragmentation. The originally tempered plans for liberalisation of the existing system were replaced by demands for autonomy or the outright independence of the different nations and nationalities. As disintegratory tendencies escalated and intensified, it became obvious that the old Union could not be preserved and that new, independent states were bound to come into existence and replace the former Union republics. This development could not fail to have serious political, social and economic repercussions. It was also inevitable that it would have far-reaching consequences for education in all the respective areas.

*Belarus' is the name preferred by the Belorussians.

The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The three Baltic countries became parts of the Tsarist empire only in the 18th century. Before that, they had for centuries been an area in which educational ideas and institutions paramount in Western and Central Europe tended markedly to prevail.

German, Polish and Swedish cultural influences in the area were responsible for the creation of prestigious educational establishments, such as the famous Riga Cathedral School (13th Century), the Vilna Jesuit Academy (1579), the gymnasia at Tartu (1630) and Tallinn (1631). But native writers established independent national traditions in the 19th century: Iohan Kupner, pastors Iohan-Philipp Root and G. I. Yannau in Estonia; Garlib Merkel, I. Braunschweig and Ian Tsimze, in Latvia; Simonas Daukantas, L. Ivinskis, M. Akelaitis, A. Strazdas, K. Nezabitauskas, V. Gadonas, M. Valenchius, K. Aleknavichius, F. Kurshaitis and Eduardas Gizerius in Lithuania, to mention just a few of them [2]. They represented different outlooks in educational and pedagogical thought, but what they all shared was their attachment to national culture, their struggle for education in the mother tongue against foreign influence and their determination to spare no effort to improve the education of their co-nationals. In part, at least, thanks to the efforts of these individuals, the people of the Baltic countries were able to enjoy two decades of independent political existence in the interwar period 1918–40. Incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, the three republics saw their chance to become independent again in the changed political climate brought about by *glasnost*. Lithuania declared independence on 11 March 1990; Estonia and Latvia did so on 21 August 1991, following the unsuccessful coup in Moscow.

Today, the aims of education in the Baltic states tend to reflect both a natural tendency to respect the distinct personalities of individual pupils and students and also the determination to provide a proper institutional framework for the cultivation and unhampered development of national languages, literatures and cultures. By 1989, this tendency was clearly identified under the impact of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforming ideas. In the debate at the Nationalities' Plenum in Moscow that year, V. J. Valas, the Estonian representative, declared the following:

The nation is the basic form of human existence, with roots that reach back into the distant past and ahead into the foreseeable future; and national culture, which takes shape over centuries by absorbing the experience of generations, is the foundation of universal human values. It is nations and peoples, not a formless mass of people, that are the makers of history. Destroying their integrity leads inevitably to moral decline, the deformation of culture, neglect of the environment, ecological anomalies and, finally, stagnation. [3]

There are good reasons to assume that the converse is also true and that the affirmation of their integrity is bound to lead to moral rebirth, enhancement of national cultures and, ultimately, full national renaissance. Not unnaturally, the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians see their countries as an integral part of the Baltic region and Northern Europe, and expect help particularly from their Scandinavian neighbours. They also confidently look towards full membership of the Council of Europe and the European Economic Community, which would advance still further their cultural and economic integration with the West. They are already members of the United Nations and have also succeeded in joining some other international bodies such as UNESCO.

Yet serious problems still await solution. The most complicated is the problem of the language of instruction at school. This is due to mass migration from other parts of the USSR into the Baltic countries over the last decades. While 80% of the inhabitants of Lithuania are Lithuanians (and nearly 9% Russians), after almost half a century of Soviet

occupation, Latvians constitute only some 52% of the population of Latvia and Estonians only 62% of the population of Estonia [4]. Making acceptable arrangements to ensure the right to education in the mother tongue for the Russians and other nationalities living in the Baltic states, therefore, presents a problem. This is aggravated by the fact that very few Russians living and working there have knowledge of the Baltic languages and, indeed, any desire to master them [5].

Controversies of a similar kind surround study in higher education establishments. Maintaining existing arrangements in Latvia, for example, would in most cases mean continuing teaching in two parallel divisions, Latvian and Russian. That is not an arrangement which the Latvians want to continue after so many years of foreign domination [6]. The new education act which is to come into force in 1993 includes a proposal for using Latvian, Russian and English as languages of instruction in institutions of higher learning, but it only offers a guarantee of teaching in Latvian. It is quite unlikely that the Russian minority will ever be able to master Latvian, certainly not in such a short time [7]. It is not easy to find a way out of this impasse. The situation is rendered even more difficult by arguments concerning subsequent employment opportunities and prospects for professional advancement. This proves yet again that it is difficult to strike a correct and fair balance between ensuring a legitimate right for the indigenous majority to protect its interests and the immigrants' right to education in the mother tongue.

In the meanwhile, the new Ministries of Education in the three Baltic states have taken important decisions to democratise and modernise the administration and management of the educational systems and to improve their efficiency. This is to be achieved by a more rigorous and more frequent inspection of schools; by stricter control over teacher training; spending, hopefully, more money on education and seeking the advice of educational experts from abroad. School Boards which have replaced the City and District Education Councils consist of freely elected individuals and not party appointees. Lack of funds remains, however, a great problem. Baltic communities living abroad have offered help and are recruiting teachers from within their own ranks, particularly, to help with foreign language teaching. But all this is far from being adequate.

Compulsory education lasting nine years (four years in the primary and five in lower secondary grades) is strictly enforced. A universal school starting age of six is gradually being introduced. Upper secondary grades (10, 11 and 12) have for years provided Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian pupils with educational opportunities superior to those available to Russian pupils living in the Baltic republics, who studied for two years only. Plans are now being made to make grade 12 available to all upper secondary school pupils, without regard to their nationality.

Revising the content of education is another task. Constructing new curricula and preparing new syllabuses is a challenging and time-consuming exercise. Printing new textbooks is considered an urgent and important task, priority being given to the textbooks in national literature (including the works of émigré poets and writers), and national history and geography; but it is an expensive business. So is the acquisition of modern learning aids.

The separation of university teaching from research and the concentration of the latter in specialised research institutes has been the subject of sharp criticism. Steps are now being taken to integrate the two and allow specialists to do both teaching and research, to their own advantage [8].

A particularly encouraging recent development has been the establishment of a Baltic republics' Joint Council, representing all five pedagogical institutes in the area: Tallinn in Estonia, Daugavpils and Liepāja in Latvia; Vilnius and Siauliai in Lithuania. Its aim is to establish closer links and promote effective cooperation among them [9].

Medium- and long-term exchanges of teachers, lecturers and students between educational institutions in the Baltic countries and those in Northern and Western Europe and America are growing in significance. Closer cultural integration of the three Baltic republics with the West is becoming a reality.

Ukraine

The Ukrainian nation has long been waging a struggle for independent political existence. But it is only now that the real opportunity has arisen to establish an independent and sovereign Ukraine on a firm and lasting basis. Not that this has come easily; but the determination of its people, resulting from a widespread growth in national consciousness and the establishment of a distinct national identity, are at last bearing fruit. Back in the 18th century, Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda and in the following century Aleksandr Vasil'evich Dukhnovich, Grigorii Fedorovich Kvitka-Osnov'yanenko and Ivan Petrovich Kotlyarevsky laid down the foundations for the people's right to education in their mother tongue. Still, the fight for education in the Ukrainian language had to continue in the 20th century, when Ukrainian teachers and children had to struggle against Russification and Polonisation [10].

In the Ukraine of today (which declared itself to be sovereign and independent on 24 August 1991), there live some 53 million people, almost three-quarters of whom consider themselves to be Ukrainians. Over 10 million Russians and smaller numbers of other nationalities also live in Ukraine. In the 1980s Russian was the dominant language of instruction, particularly in eastern Ukraine and in all urban centres. Moldavian, Hungarian and, to a negligible extent, Polish were also used as teaching languages in certain areas.

Educational reforms in Ukraine today go in the direction of ensuring education in the mother tongue for all children of Ukrainian nationality at school and all students of Ukrainian nationality in higher education establishments. Lessons and courses in Russian for pupils and students of Russian nationality residing in the republic continue. Structural reforms have to wait for more prosperous times, but the marxist-leninist bias has gone and has been replaced by an emphasis on Ukrainian national tradition and culture in the teaching of history, geography, literature and social studies. New textbooks are replacing the old ones, though it will be some time yet before this will apply to all grades at school and all courses in higher education. The demand for properly qualified teachers has grown, but increasingly meaningful contacts and exchanges with Ukrainians living in Canada, USA, Australia and Western Europe are likely to modernise and improve the teaching of all subjects and particularly that of foreign languages. Teaching methods remain traditional on the whole, but that is also bound to change.

The communist youth organisations have completely disappeared, their place having been taken by freely formed associations of young people, genuinely and deeply interested in Ukrainian history and the country's future. *Rukh*, the powerful and popular independence movement and the radical Ukrainian Republican Party back nationalist tendencies.

Still, problems remain. Religious divisions are quite significant and have a history of direct confrontation behind them. The Ukrainian Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox, the Greek Catholic and the Roman Catholic, as well as the Baptist Churches, all have their adherents. Some disagreements and disputes concerning church property have resurfaced again and, regrettably, led to renewed tension. But the Ukrainians are proud of Kievan Rus' accepting Christianity a long time before it had reached and been accepted by Muscovy.

Ukraine is second in population only to Russia among all the former Union republics. Its importance can be gauged from the fact that for years it has consistently been responsible for a quarter of the Soviet Union's industrial output and more than 20% of its food

production. The new Commonwealth of Independent States would be so much poorer without Ukraine. Meanwhile, the depth of the economic crisis produces additional difficulties and causes financial shortages. Environmental pollution caused by Chernobyl and unceasing pressures for rapid industrialisation still spread serious illness and lower the standard of health among tens of thousands of pre-school and school-age children. For the time being this makes educational advancement very difficult. But the long-term prospects for educational improvement are very much more hopeful. So, too, is the prospect that education will correspond more closely to the wishes of the citizens of an independent Ukraine.

Belarus'

Belarus' [11], with nearly 10 million inhabitants, of whom about 80% are of Belorussian nationality, has also had to face a long and difficult struggle for recognition of the right to teach its children in the mother tongue. In 1988, claims were made that only some 14% of Belorussian children in the republic were being taught in Belorussian. Until recently, not a single school in any city or town offered instruction in Belorussian in all school subjects. That provides a sad contrast to the claim that 83.5% of Belorussians regarded Belorussian as their mother tongue [12].

In the 19th century individual poets, writers and teachers tried to promote the teaching of Belorussian children in their own language. Urged by the words of the great educational thinker, Konstantin Ushinsky, that teaching children in their mother tongue was a distinct advantage, Aloiza Stepanovna Pashkevich (Tetka) organised the first schools teaching in Belorussian, wrote the first reader for them in 1906 and started the first educational journal in Belorussian in 1913 [13]. But since then progress in this direction has been slow, indicating that without full political independence there is not much hope for the organisation of a national system of education teaching in the mother tongue.

Under *glasnost'* the movement towards an increased opportunity for grassroot initiatives began to gain momentum; but demands for reforms from below met resistance and opposition from the authorities, who were still determined not to permit the separation of Belarus' from Russia. However, things began to change after the declaration of independence by Belarus' on 25 August 1991, following the coup. While in 1990–91 only 20 secondary schools were teaching in Belorussian in the capital city, Min'sk, the number increased to 34 (out of some 200) in the school year 1991–92. According to recent reports, 28.9% of children of primary school age now learn all subjects in Belorussian. Yet progress is not uniform at all levels. Only 22% of infants in kindergartens are taught in the mother tongue. Lack of textbooks in Belorussian at all levels is one cause of difficulties. Another is the scarcity of teachers properly qualified to teach the different subjects in Belorussian. This, in turn, slows down the efforts to teach Belorussian literature, history and geography, which the Ministry of Education is now very keen to promote [14].

In establishments of higher learning, teaching in Russian continues, but the teaching of socio-political subjects in a marxist-leninist spirit has ceased. The Skaryna Centre of the Belorussian Academy of Sciences devotes all its attention to research on Belorus' history, particularly the early periods under Lithuanian and Polish rule which have, until now, been very much neglected. The first Congress of Belorussicists took place in 1991, attracting the attention of many scholars abroad and creating quite a stir among the Belorussians themselves.

Among the different nationalities inhabiting Belarus', the Russians are by far the largest and the most significant one. They constitute nearly 12% of the total population, the remainder being made up by Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians and several smaller ethnic

groups. It is encouraging to note that the new educational authorities have also given their consent to educating children of other than Belorussian and Russian nationality in their own mother tongue. This is a positive development which is likely to lead to the better international understanding that is so badly needed in that part of Eastern Europe [15].

Russia

Russia has for centuries been, and is today, the most important Slavonic country, largely because of her size, population, history and natural wealth. During the last four centuries until its demise in 1917, the Tsarist empire expanded greatly in all directions, adding to the Russian crown many non-Russian territories in Eastern Europe and Asia, inhabited by peoples of very diverse ethnic origin, race and religion. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic inherited from it many regions and areas inhabited by non-Russians, and Boris Yeltsin's Russia of today is also a multiethnic and multicultural state. Although Russian cultural predominance over all other influences in this vast area is beyond dispute, most of the different nationalities and ethnic groups living there have now also decided to demand cultural autonomy, and that proper regard be paid to their developmental needs and aspirations.

The Russian educational tradition, reaching far back into the past, but fully elaborated and developed by the great educational writers of the 18th and 19th centuries, is very much a synthesis of West European thought on education in that period with the product of the Russian genius. The writings of Mikhail Vasil'evich Lomonosov, Vissarion Grigor'evich Belinsky, Nikolai Ivanovich Pirogov, Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Aleksandrovich Dobrolyubov, Konstantin Dmitrevich Ushinsky, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy, Dmitrii Ivanovich Pisarev, Nikolai Vasil'evich Shelgunov, Vladimir Yakovlevich Stoyunin, Vasilii Ivanovich Vodovozov, Konstantin Nikolaevich Ventsel, Petr Frantsevich Lesgaft, Ivan Mikhailovich Sechenov, Sergei Semenovich Uvarov, Georgii Ivanovich Chelpanov, Nikolai Aleksandrovich Korf—to mention only some of the famous names—have remained to this very day potential sources of inspiration for developments in the future [16]. Even some of the later Soviet Russian pedagogues, particularly Stanislav Shatsky, and more recently Vasilii Sukhomlinsky, produced works on education of lasting value.

Administration and Control of the System of Education

With the gradual decline in importance of the All-Union State Committee on Public Education, the Russian Ministry of Education under Eduard Dneprov came to exercise real influence in the country during the course of the last two years, a development which was accentuated by the final decision to terminate the Committee's existence in November 1991. The Ministry is in many respects currently continuing reforms begun by the Committee under the influence of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*. The stress placed upon democratisation, liberalisation and individualisation of learning has remained undiminished; indeed, it has increased. It shows itself now in expanding opportunities for participation in decision-making at the different levels by various interest groups and representatives of professional bodies; a greater measure of autonomy for individual schools and other educational establishments; the establishment and subsequent growth of the private sector in the system.

Several private schools, colleges and even universities have been created. As the number of such schools has increased, *Rossiiskaya Assotsatsiya Negosudarstvennykh Shkol* (the Russian Association of Schools Independent from the State) has been formed in Moscow [17].

At the higher education level new establishments have come into being in connection with the move towards a market economy, most of them with substantial help from the West. Prominent among them is the Mocow Higher Management School. Branches have now been opened in Kazan and Vladivostok. Western training ventures, such as Mirbis, a Moscow-based joint Russian-Italian business school, have also been started, while numerous US firms bring Russian managers to the United States for intensive study [18].

In addition, two independent Russian-American Universities have come into existence in Moscow and St. Petersburg, offering courses in English, business studies, marketing, finance and management, and charging tuition fees. Only a quarter of the staff are Russian, while the rest are from the USA and Western Europe. The Russian State Humanities University, under its rector Yurii Afanas'ev, has also opened its doors to the students.

The first day of December 1990 saw the opening of a Higher School of Religious Philosophy in St. Petersburg. It was formed by a group then known as the Leningrad Union of Scholars. The School operates evening classes in Christian, Buddhist and Islamic thought, the philosophy of religion and the languages associated with these traditions [19].

These new initiatives, intimately linked to the process of reorienting the new Russia towards the introduction of the market economy, closer international cooperation and the removal of ideological constraints on establishing more meaningful links with the academic world of the West, are a clear indication of how far things have changed in that part of Europe. However, such changes also bring less welcome phenomena. One of them is the exodus of experts and highly qualified specialists in many fields from numerous Russian research establishments and institutions of higher learning. What was, to begin with, a small stream of individuals, selected and invited for a limited time for a study or research visit, has now expanded into a much larger wave of emigrants, numbering thousands. They principally leave for the United States, but some also go to Western Europe. The fear expressed in Russian scientific circles is that many of them will be away from home for a long time; some, indeed, may never return. This is increasingly seen as a most regrettable brain drain which will have serious consequences in slowing down scientific and technological advancement and important research work in the new Russian republic [20].

Content and Methods in Education

Changes in the content and methods of education are the result of three main tendencies. The first is to diversify curricula in order to increase freedom of choice of courses by older pupils, and to ensure that as far as possible each child works to the limits of his or her ability. The second tendency is to free the existing content of all remaining marxist-leninist bias and to allow all pupils and students to make independently valid rational judgements on major political, social and economic issues. The third tendency is to give proper scope to pupils coming from different ethnic backgrounds for studying and appreciating the language, history and culture of their own people, and at the same time for developing positive attitudes towards the other ethnic groups and nationalities inhabiting the Russian republic.

Diversification of the content of learning is proceeding fastest in the big cities and large urban centres. Particularly suited for this are the new gymnasia and lycees whose upper grades offer not only new subjects such as the history of religion or history of philosophy, but also a choice of specialisation: mathematics-physics-chemistry; history-literature; or foreign languages and literatures. Some gymnasia have proposed extending the course of secondary education by one year for talented youngsters aspiring to enter universities.

Removing the ideological bias which has for decades heavily dominated all teaching in Soviet schools is not always as straightforward as it may seem at first sight. Teachers with

long and successful professional experience behind them sometimes include convinced communists who find it hard to abandon—still harder to criticise—the beliefs they cherished for many years of their lives. Old textbooks frequently cannot simply be substituted, but must be completely replaced by new ones and that takes time and large amounts of money which is now more and more difficult to obtain through official channels. Little wonder that parents often find that they must contribute towards the education of their children in one way or another. This causes widespread dissatisfaction among many parents, who are now also facing higher prices for goods and services in general. Nevertheless, the practice of charging for extra lessons, extracurricular activities and new equipment is growing.

After decades of militant atheistic education in all schools, opportunities for the study of religion are being created in many schools. This is far from being a universal practice, as there are only a few Orthodox priests or teachers prepared to teach religion. The attitudes of parents towards this phenomenon are far from uniform, some parents favouring it, some raising objections. Meanwhile, the number of Sunday Schools offering religious instruction has been growing all over Russia and even in Moscow it is said, there are now more than 200. They teach Church Slavonic, singing and common prayers. Full-time schools under the explicit auspices of religious bodies are also beginning to appear, but their legal status is not clear. In addition, the Christian Education Society has come into existence in Moscow and a private gymnasium has recently been opened with its support in the capital.

It is clear that Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* and *perestroika* have been instrumental in allowing grassroots initiatives to come to the fore in educational matters also. The voices of teachers and pedagogues demanding much greater respect for pupils' personalities and their undeniable right to self-fulfilment are no longer suppressed, as often happened in the past. The words of the chief exponent of humanitarian education, the dauntless Georgian educator Shalva Amonashvili, are now heard very clearly:

Personality is born in a struggle with one's own self, through the process of self-discovery and self-determination; and education and learning should aim at preparing the child for taking the road towards moulding one's own personality, and helping the child to be victorious in this difficult struggle. [21]

Progressive ideas are promoted by Teacher Innovators, the Eureka Clubs and the Authors' Schools, and are wholeheartedly supported by the Creative Union of Teachers. The Central Council of the latter, consisting of 27 elected members, includes such outstanding reformists as Eduard Dneprov, Shalva Amonashvili, Vasilii Davydov and Aleksandr Adamsky, who also leads the Eureka Programme supporting educational experiments in schools. The latter enables teachers and schools administrators to gather together at regular intervals in order to share and discuss experiments designed to improve teaching and learning in individual schools and groups of schools. As is the case with many similar worthwhile initiatives, progress is slowed down because of mounting financial and organisational difficulties and constantly dwindling resources [22].

Youth Culture

Some observers of the Russian educational scene reduce the tensions prevailing in the system to a direct confrontation between 'the perestroika generation' and the adult generation, for whom Communist Party ideology was life itself. This is not without reason. Witnessing the collapse of the former youth organisations, some of the older hardline activists have come out to attack liberalising forces quite openly. They have been joined by

some teachers and youth leaders. In the Perm Province Party Committee, an argument was put forward:

After the CPSU and the Young Communist League leave the schools, their place will immediately be taken by parties with a bourgeois political orientation. Communists at educational institutions must clearly understand that supporting depoliticisation and de-ideologisation means supporting our own disarmament . . . The Party must oppose the alien ideological influence of the Russian Republic's Supreme Soviet and the Russian Congress at educational institutions. [23]

Other commentators had realised much earlier that the young generation was not inclined to go on listening uncritically to discredited political leaders. In an honest New Year message to his leaders, the deputy editor of the youth daily *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, announced courageously in 1987:

We have lied loudly and brazenly, shut our eyes to the truth and compromised our principles. Enough! The time for chanting ritual hosannas is past. Our time has come, comrade. [24]

Gorbachev's *glasnost* has certainly helped to expose widespread dissatisfaction among the young with the way they were subjected to manipulation, and their reaction has been swift. Informal groups, independent youth clubs and associations as well as a whole range of youth gangs have come into being. Some have been helping the young to express themselves freely through activities such as rock and roll and jazz music, protection of the environment and all sorts of sports. Others have been trying to copy Western youth groups, to promote hobbies or to provide their own cultural amenities. Some young people have formed Clubs of Military History to recall Russian heroes such as Mikhail Skobylev; others have created National Patriotic Clubs to trace their own ancestors and revive the memory of the past. But there are also some less acceptable groupings like local vigilantes, drug addicts or simply gangs fighting other gangs over territory. There are also some young members of the notorious Pamyat' movement [25].

But most young people are principally expressing a desire to be taken into account at a time when the future of the country is being decided, which means their own future and their own interests. Most of them joined Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze on the barricades defending the Russian Parliament building during the fateful days of August 1991. Three paid for their commitment to the new democratic order with their lives. In October 1991 the Russian Youth League came into being, replacing the old *Komsomol*.

Teachers and Teacher Training

Efforts were made in the late 1980s to enlist broad support for *glasnost* and *perestroika* among the wider ranks of teachers. In December 1988 the long postponed Congress of Workers in Education gathered in Moscow under the motto 'Through humanisation and democratisation towards a new high-quality education!' In his speech, the Chairman of the State Committee for Education, Gennady Yagodin, urged teachers to support efforts to liberalise and modernise the system of education and called for improvement in teachers' conditions of work. He stressed that the future of the country was in teachers' hands and that it was crucial that all teachers did their very best to ensure sound education for the young. The deliberations took several days and various views and opinions were expressed. Some speakers were highly critical of the existing set-up, particularly of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences which had previously been vigorously attacked by the *Uchitel'skaya Gazeta* (Teachers Paper) [26]. Other speakers were against change and wanted to retain the principal features of the old system and the

teachers' commitment to building communism. The Congress ended in a stalemate, and no clear decisions were taken to go 'all out' for reform.

In 1989 sociological surveys revealed that well over 80% of all teachers were dissatisfied with the quality of their training. Large numbers of teachers leaving the profession confirmed their dissatisfaction with the conditions of work. A year later, the State Committee on Education published its *Kontseptsiya pedobrazovaniya* (Concept of Teacher Education); but it was generally felt that little of value was to be found in it—certainly not enough to ensure an educational renaissance in the country [27].

Yet Russia has never lacked teachers and pedagogues with sound and positive ideas, deeper insights and new concepts which could greatly influence teaching and teacher training for the better. The conviction has been growing lately that they should be given a much greater opportunity to help shape the contents and methods of teacher-training. A proposal which is now gaining widening support suggests finding a new, less authoritarian role for the Ministry of Education, namely that of providing expert advice and consultation.

Russian teachers face a difficult time in this period of rapidly growing shortages and deficiencies. They are left unclear about the nature of the new educational foundations which would best match the emerging pattern of social and political development. However, among members of the younger generation there are many who want to take advantage of the more liberal atmosphere, the freedom from bureaucratic constraints and the opportunity to serve the country's children to the best of their ability. It would be a tragedy to see them disappointed.

Conclusion

In the late 1980s most people assumed that political and economic changes in the Soviet Union would follow an orderly and peaceful course. Liberalisation and modernisation were the two important foundations upon which a better life was to be built. Mikhail Gorbachev's words for them were *glasnost* and *perestroika*. The two parallel policies of increasing political openness and promoting economic restructuring were supposed to enhance and not to undermine the political unity and material prosperity of the country. This was not an unreasonable expectation. Yet things did not move that way. Nationalism and economic reorganisation produced an entirely new situation. Independent states came into being.

The creation of nation states is, of course, a continuation of a long trend in European history. It has considerable advantages. Nations previously subject to foreign rule can now take charge of their own destiny and formulate their own priorities in cultural and educational affairs. They can begin to enjoy the undoubted educational benefits of independent political existence.

This is all to the good. The problem is that there is no single country without national minorities and it is the treatment of the minorities indigenous to particular areas which presents difficulties [27]. For the new governments, policies of domination, enforced assimilation or separation are out of question [28]. The policy of 'tranquil integration' can work only with an enormous amount of good will and mutual respect on both sides. Tragically, it is precisely this which is lacking. Only a determined effort by both sides to use education to foster genuine respect for persons irrespective of their race, religion or ethnic origin can bring about a solution. Regrettably, whether nations which have long histories of conflict between them can actually bring themselves together to accomplish that must remain an open question.

In addition, mounting economic difficulties are seriously delaying cultural and educational progress in Eastern Europe. Again, it is impossible to imagine that these difficulties

can be overcome without an honest desire for international cooperation in the economic field. To make this a reality, the new states would have to agree to participate in establishing a large-scale economic community without tariff and trade barriers hampering free exchange of goods and services. That also may prove not easy for the new countries aiming at full political sovereignty. But reason may prevail as the advantages of a market common to a large number of states begin to manifest themselves.

If progress is to be made, close cooperation between the West and the new countries in Eastern Europe is of the greatest importance. This applies to all fields, including education. Teachers and pedagogues from the West and the East must meet together to discuss common problems and their solutions. Today this can be done without ideological constraints getting in the way of an honest exchange of views. For this reason such meetings are likely to be much more productive now than they have ever been in the past [29]. There is much to exchange in respect of educational aims and objectives; the outcomes of alternative educational strategies; proposals for the improvement of schools; evaluation of educational policies; the formulation of plans for the future, and many other topics. Encounters of this kind should become commonplace. The 400th anniversary of the great European educator, Jan Amos Komensky, in 1992 could mark the beginning of a new era in European education.

NOTES

- [1] On 15 November 1991 the Union of Sovereign States (USS) officially came into being and replaced the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Only 7 of the former 15 Union republics declared formally then their access to the USS. A new Commonwealth of Independent States has since been proclaimed. Only time will show how strong and enduring the new political formation is to be. Future prospects for a new economic formation, the Unified Economic Area, are most uncertain at this stage.
- [2] SHABAEVA, M.F. (Ed.) (1973) *Ocherki istorii shkoly i pedagogicheskoi mysli narodov SSR (History of School and Pedagogical Thought of the Nations of Soviet Socialist Republics)*, (Moscow, Pedagogika), pp. 433–447 and 465–490.
- [3] *Pravda*, 21 September 1989, p. 6. See also *Current Digest of Soviet Press* (CDSP), XLI, 39, p. 11.
- [4] Figures refer to the 1989 census of population, the last fully completed and officially available source of information on the subject.
- [5] The issue is further complicated by the fact that the Russians living in the Baltic states reside, on the whole, in compact groups and constitute large majorities in certain towns, for example in Narva, Kohtla-Järve and Sillamäe in Estonia. See also *Izvestia*, 6 July 1991, p. 2.
- [6] In 1940, the proportion of Russians in the population was around 3% in Estonia and 12% in Latvia; in 1990 it was over 35% in Latvia and about 30% in Estonia.
- [7] *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES), 30 August 1991, p. 11.
- [8] MITTER, WOLFGANG, *Bericht über eine Informations- und Vortragsreise nach Estland auf Einladung des Rektors der Technischen Universität Tallinn vom 12. bis 19. Oktober 1991*. Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, November 1991; see also *Izvestia*, 6 July 1991, p. 2.
- [9] See RAUN, TOIVO (1991) Higher education and research in the Baltic States, in the Institute for the Study of Soviet Education *Newsletter*, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA, 1, 1, November pp. 9 and 15.
- [10] See KALASKY, JOHN (1968) *Education in Soviet Ukraine, A Study in Discrimination and Russification* (Toronto, Peter Martin Associates); also TOMIAK, JANUSZ (Ed.) (1991) *Schooling, Educational Policy and Ethnic Identity*, Vol. 1 of the series of Comparative Studies on Governments and Non-dominant Ethnic Groups in Europe (1850–1940), published in association with the European Science Foundation (New York, Dartmouth, Aldershot and University Press), pp. 163–184 and 185–210.
- [11] The Belorussians insist that their country should be referred to as Belarus' and not Belorussia, to emphasise its distinct cultural and linguistic identity.
- [12] According to the 1979 census of population.
- [13] KAIROV, IVAN A. (1964) *Pedagogicheskaya Entsiklopediya (Pedagogical Encyclopedia)* (Moscow) pp. 178–179.
- [14] RICH, VERA (1991) *Education in Belarus'*, a report presented at the UK Study Group on Soviet Education Annual Conference, London, 16 November.
- [15] See the *Belarus'* monthly which provides, among other information, some details concerning schools and

- children in the republic, e.g. SAVITSKI, M. (1991) Stane asnovai kontseptsyi novai shkoly? in *Belarus'*, October, p. 8.
- [16] See DARLINGTON, THOMAS (1909) *Report on Education in Russia*, Vol. 23, Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Board of Education (London, HMSO); HANS, NICHOLAS (1963) *The Russian Tradition in Education* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul); SHABAEVA, M.F. (Ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 333–338; JOHNSON, WILLIAM (1969) *Russia's Educational Heritage* (New York, Octagon Books); ANWEILER, OSKAR (1964) *Geschichte der Schule und Pädagogik in Russland vom Ende des Zarenreiches bis zum Beginn der Stalin-Ära* (Berlin, Osteuropa-Institut, Heidelberg, Quelle and Meyer), pp. 12–64.
- [17] *Uchitel'skaya gazeta*, 42, 15–22 October 1991, p. 1; see also STROGETSKY, V. (1991) Kto novenkovo?, *Uchitel'skaya gazeta*, 40, 1–8 October, p. 8.
- [18] *US News and World Report*, 31 July 1989, pp. 41–42.
- [19] Central Asian Studies Association, *Newsletter*, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 10–11, Spring-Summer 1991, p. 17.
- [20] *Izvestia*, 8 May 1991, p. 3; *Byulleten' Gosudarstvennogo Komiteta SSR po Narodnomu Obrazovaniyu* (seriya prof. obraz.), 12, 1990, p. 40.
- [21] AMONASHVILI, SHALVA, A. (1983) Personality, in: *Zdravstvuite, deti!* (Hello, Children!) (Moscow, Prosveshchenie), Ch. VI, p. 164.
- [22] *Uchitel'skaya gazeta*, 23 May 1989, p. 1; see also SUTHERLAND, JEANNE (1990) Perestroika in education—from innovation to independence?, UK Study Group on Soviet Education, *Soviet Education Study Bulletin*, 8, 2, Autumn pp. 68–78.
- [23] *Perm Province Party Committee's Information Bulletin*, quoted by Oleg Gazman in *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 26 June 1991, p. 1; also *CDPS*, XLIII, 26, 31 July 1991, p. 22.
- [24] SNEGIREV, V. (1987) *Litsom k vetru* (Let's face the wind), *Sobesednik*, 1, January, p. 2, quoted by Jim Riordan in his paper *Soviet Youth*, given at the 1987 Annual Conference of the UK Study Group on Soviet Education, p. 2.
- [25] See RIORDAN, JIM (Ed.) (1989) *Soviet Youth Culture* (London, Macmillan); also by the same author, New directions for Soviet Youth, *Soviet Education Study Bulletin*, 9, 1, Spring, 1991, pp. 1–10.
- [26] In the 1988 Congress a group of liberally oriented pedagogues associated in *Vremennyi nauchno-issledovatel'skii kollektiv 'Shkola'* (VNIK) presented a project of a far-reaching educational reform *Kontseptsiya obshchevo srednevo obrazovaniya* (Concept of general secondary education). This project had been prepared by Eduard Dneprov, Valery Pivovarov, Yurii Krupnov, Boris Bim-Bad, Oleg Gazman, Vasilii Davydov and a number of other pedagogues.
- [27] See MARK, RUDOLF A. (1989) *Die Völker der Sowjetunion. Ein Lexikon* (Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag) and STÖLTING, ERHARD (1990) *Eine Weltmacht zerbricht. Nationalitäten und Religionen der UdSSR* (Frankfurt am Main, Eichborn Verlag).
- [28] See TOMIAK, JANUSZ *op. cit.*, pp. 389–417.
- [29] One good example was the International Workshop *Recent Trends in Eastern European Education*, organised jointly under the auspices of UNESCO and the German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main, by the Director of the Institute, Professor Wolfgang Mitter in Frankfurt am Main, 5–7 June, 1991; another example was the *Oxford International Roundtable on Educational Policy*, organised by the Director of Norham Centre for Leadership Studies, Dr Vivian Williams, at St. Peter's College, Oxford 3–9 September 1991. In both meetings scholars from Eastern as well as Western Europe took part.